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CANADA TO IRELAND

T. FISHER UNWIN, LTD.,
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The Visit of the "Duchess of Connaught's Own"

BY
A. M. DRYSDALE

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Colonel O'Donohue, Officer commanding the Irish Canadians, with the Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of all Ireland

CANADA TO IRELAND

The Visit of the "Duchess of Connaught's Own"

IRISHMEN who have made their homes on the American continent, and have subsequently visited the country of their origin, flatter themselves that they have experienced something of the traditional Irish hospitality; and it is quite true that no visitors are welcomed to Ireland more cordially than the American and Canadian sons of emigrants from the homeland. But after the wonderful progress of the Duchess of Connaught's Own Irish Canadian Rangers through Ireland in the last days of January and the opening days of February, it must be declared that even an Irish emigrant had not learnt how cordial his old country could be to him on his return until he had donned the uniform which associated him in the face of the world with the cause of the Allies and the resistance of small nationalities to the oppression of Germany.

The reception of Colonel O'Donohue, himself the son of an emigrant from Clonakilty, near Cork, and of his seven hundred officers and men, all of them of Irish origin, was beyond all

precedent. Every town they visited met them with at least two bands, and sometimes three, and for a week they marched to the almost continuous strains of "Come Back to Erin," "Let Erin Remember," "The Wearing of the Green," "The Minstrel Boy," "The Harp that once through Tara's Halls," and, of course, "The Maple Leaf." The rationing of the best-fed army in the world was made to look poor by contrast with the generous meals laid before the visitors not only on public occasions of hospitality but in the regimental barracks in which they were quartered.

A Unanimous Welcome

"Is this a barracks or an hotel?" some of them asked when, day after day, they found their beds made for them and their water-pitchers filled. One of the men boasted to the lieutenant of his company: "I am waited on by an orderly like any officer." These kindly attentions were paid them by the Irish regiments who happened to find themselves in barracks with them, and who wished to bear their share in the national welcome. The Irish newspapers of all views devoted many columns every day to the record of their proceedings, one of them publishing the names of all the officers and men so that their friends and kinsmen in Ireland should learn of their presence in the battalion.

The Catholic Church, the Protestant Church, all the public bodies within a wide neighbourhood of the towns visited, participated in the

welcome. At Armagh, Cork, and Limerick, as at Belfast, the girls pinned ribbons of orange and green to the men's tunics, and demanded regimental badges and buttons in return. Cork and Limerick upheld the old tradition which credits the South of Ireland with a yet more delicate courtesy than that of the most courteous race in the world, by entertaining the men at lunch with their officers, and appointing to wait upon them the ladies of the district who themselves are used to being waited upon.

Cold Weather, but Warm Hearts

The detailed record of the tour must necessarily be a repetition of the separate local welcomes which in the end made up the Cead Mile Failte of the nation. In the two days of the Dublin visit the cold was arctic, and when the Canadians paraded without overcoats their endurance was much admired. All the same, the people were much gratified to notice that the great-coats were worn on the second day, for such cold as prevailed could not be remembered by the oldest citizens. The low temperature continued throughout the tour, but otherwise the weather was favourable; and though snow-blocks were heard of in various parts of the country the travels of the Irish Canadians did not bring them into contact with anything of the kind. Even if the cold had been severer, however, it would have been forgotten and forgiven in gratitude for the splendidly warm welcome extended to the visitors immediately on their

arrival in the land of their fathers by *Freeman's Journal*, the great organ of Nationalist Ireland. This famous newspaper used such cordial expressions as these :—

They have come to Ireland moved solely by that high and enduring love of Ireland which has made of the Greater Ireland a tower of strength and protection to us. Just as they have put all to the hazard in the cause of what they regard as the freedom of Europe, so they have come to the old sod as to a shrine of the race for a blessing and God-speed. There is no Irishman of any party who will not pay honour to their self-devotion in the cause of what they believe to be the right, and respond to the characteristic Irish feeling that has brought them here upon their way. Their predecessors at the front have covered Canada with glory. It is part of our pride that so many of them were not merely of Irish stock, but native to the soil. The Irish Canadian Rangers will find on the little crosses in Flanders the name of many an Irish-born, many a Dublin-born, lad. Like our Irish regiments, this Canadian regiment is, in the words of Mr. Asquith, the free-will offering of a free people. Canada's soldiers are true soldiers of liberty, and as such they will be welcomed from end to end of Ireland.

The Lord Mayor of Dublin

On the Friday morning—their first as a battalion, if not their first as individuals, in the Irish capital—the Rangers were visited at Wellington Barracks by the Lord Mayor, Mr. Gallagher, the High Sheriff, leading clergy (both Protestant and Catholic), professors from the universities, and representative citizens. On the parade ground the Lord Mayor, one of the most

influential Nationalists of the city, addressed the battalion, offering them a most cordial welcome, in the course of which he said :—

> It is a great gratification to me to see such a fine body of men who have responded voluntarily to the call of duty and donned the uniform of the King in order to defend those rights and liberties which we so dearly love. I understand you are Irish by birth or descent, and that you embrace amongst your ranks men of all shades of religious and political opinion. You have set a fine example of what Irishmen can do if they only come together for one cause—the cause of liberty and humanity.

The Colonel, whose handsome soldierly figure —he is 6 ft. 4 in.—was greatly admired, though not more greatly than his graceful little speeches came to be, fittingly acknowledged the city's welcome, modestly expressing the hope that when the Irish Canadians reached the field of battle—where he himself, by the way, has already spent 15 months, though of that he said nothing—their performances would not shame the land of their origin—"dear old Ireland."

Through the Streets to Phœnix Park

Later in the day the battalion marched through the greater part of the city to the world-famed Phœnix Park to be reviewed by the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland and the Commander-in-Chief of the Irish Forces. The streets were decorated, and along the whole route there were crowds of spectators who cheered again and again. Three Irish bands—one of them kilted, and with sporans of brilliant blue—supplied national music. The

pennant of the battalion, which was borne by one of the lieutenants, was of St. Patrick's blue, ornamented with golden shamrocks, and was made for the battalion by the Duchess of Connaught herself. Otherwise the procession was one of khaki, which, though business-like, is not spectacular. Yet the martial airs, the well-set-up appearance of the sons and grandsons of Ireland, and the thought of their long pilgrimage and its noble object, stirred the popular heart, and called forth many expressions of admiration and blessing characteristic of a chivalrous race. Dublin people were pleased to observe that the battalion passed the Mansion House at the salute—a rare compliment to the Lord Mayor.

In the Name of the King

At Phœnix Park, within picturesque view of the snow-covered hills of Dublin and Wicklow, the representative of the Irish Government repeated on behalf of the King and the nation the welcome which the Lord Mayor had already given on behalf of the city. The Lord-Lieutenant, Lord Wimborne, in frock-coat suit and silk hat was as conspicuous among the uniformed military as a United States President himself would have been. With him there were Sir Bryan Mahon, the Irish Commander-in-Chief, and many other high officers; and the spectators included the Chief Secretary, the Lord Chancellor, and the Under-Secretary. Lady Wimborne brought a number of ladies with her from the Vice-

regal Lodge. When the Lord-Lieutenant arrived the Union Jack was unfurled at the saluting base, and the bands played "God Save the King." After an inspection of the lines, Lord Wimborne addressed the battalion. Only a brief passage need be quoted to indicate the warm character of his welcome :—

> I can assure you that wherever you go in Ireland you will receive a cordial welcome and greeting. Irishmen are proud of the achievements of Irishmen across the seas, and the spectacle which you present to-day of willing devotion to a great cause is calculated to strike a chord of genuine admiration and respect. All will wish you well in your high endeavour of right against might, and will affectionately follow your fortunes and the record of your deeds, which I am confident will be worthy of the standard and tradition of your race.

At the Lord-Lieutenant's luncheon to the officers, the Under-Secretary had obtained a promise from Colonel O'Donohue to send to Dublin, as well as to Canada, a regular bulletin of the battalion's fortunes in the field—an undertaking which gave great satisfaction throughout Ireland when it became known.

On the second day of the visit to Dublin, a luncheon, given by the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House, afforded three or four hundred of the leading citizens—men of all parties and all creeds—an opportunity of meeting the officers of the Rangers. There has probably never been so thoroughly representative an assembly of Dublin men before, and the proceedings were characterized by unanimity and enthusiasm. Lord

Shaughnessy, whose son is the adjutant of the battalion, wrote expressing the hope that the return of the emigrants would be highly successful. Mr. John Redmond, the Parliamentary leader of the Irish people, who was lying ill in his snow-bound home among the Wicklow hills, and who had just been bereaved by death of his daughter, sent a letter which was read amid almost continuous applause. Its more important passages were these :—

Ireland is very proud of the sons of the Irish race, who, in every part of the Empire, have followed the lead which Ireland herself gave. From the very commencement of the war very many of my colleagues, and I myself, on scores of public platforms, declared that Ireland's highest interest was in the speedy and victorious ending of the war, and I myself have never ceased from that day to this in pointing out where Ireland's interest, honour, and duty lie in this struggle in defence of civilization and liberty. The response of the Irish race has been one of the most astonishing facts in history, and has far exceeded the most sanguine expectations entertained at the commencement of the war. From Ireland itself, according to the latest official figures, 173,772 Irishmen are serving in the Navy and Army, representing all classes and creeds amongst our people. From careful inquiries made through the churches in the North of England and Scotland, from the casualty lists, and from other sources, the calculation has been made on high authority that at least 150,000 sons of the Irish race, most of them born in Ireland itself, have joined the Colours in Great Britain. In addition to this, I am informed on the highest authority that from 20 per cent. to 25 per cent. of all the troops from the oversea Dominions are men of Irish blood. The Irish race, therefore, is represented in this war on the side of liberty and humanity by at least half a million men, who

His Eminence Cardinal Logue, with Officers of the Irish Canadians.

The March to the Catholic Cathedral at Armagh.

In the Catholic Cathedral at Armagh.

THE IRISH CANADIANS MARCHING THROUGH LIMERICK.

have voluntarily joined the Colours. Surely a proud and astonishing record! I wish the Irish Canadian Rangers the best of good fortune. I know that they will go into battle strengthened by contact with the ancient land of their fathers, and that they will do honour to Canada and do honour to Ireland.

The Unity of Ireland

The Lord Mayor, who had the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland on his right and Colonel O'Donohue on his left, proposed the toast of welcome to the Irish Canadian Rangers. He thanked the Prime Minister, the Minister for War, and the Irish Headquarters' Staff for having furthered the desire of the battalion to visit Ireland. The Irish blood of our guests, he said, was stirred by the abominable treatment which that hitherto happy, prosperous, and unoffending little nation Belgium had received at the hands of the Hun, merely because of her geographical suitability as a speedy means of reaching Paris and Calais, and ultimately their own shores. They learned of the unspeakable outrages which had been committed on innocent women and children at the instigation of that arch-hypocrite the Kaiser, and they knew that the crimes which he had committed against Christianity, civilization, and human liberty in France and Belgium would be re-enacted in Ireland if his legions ever reached the country; and so they sacrificed their material interests and pleasures in life for the stern work of war.

It is a most gratifying fact that the Rangers, differing as they do in religious and political opinions, have united in a

common bond, and are prepared to lay down their lives, if need be, in the sacred cause of humanity and liberty. May we not discern in this union an omen of the future unity of Irishmen in Ireland? May we not look forward to the time —not very distant, I trust—when our countrymen of all shades of opinion will come together and devise such a plan for the internal government of this country as will remove all cause for those ancient prejudices and that distrust of each other which have, alas! wrought so much mischief in the past and kept Irishmen asunder?

Here there was great cheering, which was renewed when the Lord Mayor proceeded to call attention to the significance of the solidarity of the British Empire against "a malignant and unscrupulous foe." The toast was warmly supported by the Lord-Lieutenant. His Excellency informed the Irish Canadians that the company assembled to welcome them was a very remarkable one inasmuch as it comprised the most distinguished citizens of Dublin without reference to their political and religious difficulties.

North and South

A very eloquent speech, which has attracted much attention because of its evidence that the spirit of union is pervading Ireland, was made by the Lord Chief Justice, Sir James Campbell, Bart., who was formerly an Irish Unionist leader in Parliament. Sir James Campbell, in the first place, spoke of his old political opponent, Mr. Redmond, with an unreserved generosity which would have been unthinkable in Irish (or even English) politics before the war. And, representing the Unionist North, he made approaches to

the Nationalist South which aroused the greatest enthusiasm in Dublin. "May I," he exclaimed, "express my own fervent hope and desire that when the reconstruction of our Imperial system is being considered, a fitting place may be found in it for my own beloved country, and that, too, notwithstanding recent events—nay, in the light of them—that a position will be found for her worthy of her history, worthy of the traditional heroism of her sons on the field of battle, and at the same time consistent with the obligations of loyalty and patriotism." If for nothing else, the Dublin luncheon will long be remembered for this pronouncement and for the fact that it did not evoke a single expression of dissent.

The Dublin hospitalities included also a luncheon by the Lord-Lieutenant, a dinner by the Attorney-General, a dinner by Lord Decies, a smoking concert at the Mansion House, a smoking concert at Wellington Barracks, and a matinée performance at the Theatre Royal.

After a two hours' railway journey, the battalion found themselves at Armagh on Sunday morning in time for service at one or other of the two beautiful cathedrals which distinguish this most picturesque of old Irish cities. The whole population met them at the railway station and cheered them tumultuously. Some three or four hundred of the battalion attended service in the Protestant Cathedral, and the remaining three or four hundred accompanied their Colonel to the Catholic Cathedral, where High Mass was celebrated in the presence of Cardinal Logue. At the close

of the services the men resolved their religious differences once more in their mingled companies of Catholics and Protestants—a demonstration of essential unity which did not pass without fruitful comment.

Cardinal Logue announced that he had received a number of religious emblems for the troops, which he would give to their chaplain for distribution.

Cardinal Logue on the War

In the course of his sermon His Eminence said he considered it an honour to have an opportunity of welcoming Colonel O'Donohue and the officers and men of the Irish Canadian Rangers. There were various reasons why they should tender that welcome with enthusiasm and gratitude. In the first place, though living in the great Dominion of Canada, with the ocean rolling between them and the mother country, when the cry went out for help from the centre of the Empire they had nobly responded, and had come there in their hundreds generously not alone offering themselves to defend the honour and the interest of the country—not only that, but to contribute to the great boon they were longing for, and all praying for, and that was the boon of peace. They were longing for peace, but it must be a just peace ; it must be a stable peace ; and it must be a permanent peace—not a mere halting time, with the nations on all sides occupied, as they had been off and on for the last thirty or forty years, in competing in shipbuilding and armaments. A peace of that kind fell very little short

of the evils of war itself, for it was exhausting the countries. They in Ireland were all grateful to the Canadians for the noble example and devotion they had shown in coming over to Europe to defend what they all believed was a just cause, in endeavouring to bring about a position which would enable the politicians, when arms had done their work, to establish a just, stable, and permanent peace. There was another reason why they welcomed them, which had a great influence with the Irish people, and that was because the Irish Canadian Rangers had a distinct Irish existence, and they from Canada were the first outside of the divisions raised there in Ireland to establish a real, genuine Irish regiment, and to come forth to maintain the credit, honour, and glory which their countrymen, scattered through the other troops of the Dominions, had already won. Reading over the list of honours, they knew that large numbers of them were Irishmen from the Dominions who knew how to maintain and even to add to the fame which Ireland ever possessed for bravery in the field of battle. It was a happy thought that induced the Irish Rangers to visit the home of their ancestors, and especially to visit that old city of Armagh—the cradle of the Irish faith—and he trusted that the testimony they had given for the love of faith and religion would bring a blessing upon them.

The Primate of the Irish Church, too, preached a sermon of fervent patriotism, and at the close of the service presented each soldier with a prayer-card to be slipped inside his cap for safe keeping.

The officers lunched with Cardinal Logue and had tea with the Protestant Archbishop, and excellent arrangements had been made for feeding the men. In the afternoon, in the presence of a great crowd, addresses of welcome were presented to the battalion by the County Council and the Urban Council, and later the populace fraternized with the soldiers, decorating them with Irish cólours, and receiving memento badges in return.

Enthusiastic Belfast

As at Armagh, so at Belfast the chief magistrate, the Citizens' Reception Committee, and the citizens themselves met the Irish Canadians at the railway station, and accompanied them to their barracks with bands and the most demonstrative enthusiasm. The streets were lavishly beflagged, and all the workpeople appeared to have taken a brief holiday. Women from the factories threw showers of confetti upon the battalion. An inspection by General Hacket-Pain, C.B., commanding the Northern District, was followed by a luncheon to the officers at the City Hall, at which 400 leading citizens were present, and there were speeches of cordial welcome by the Lord Mayor and the Attorney-General for Ireland. The men had a great dinner at the Ulster Hall, where each received also a souvenir box of handkerchiefs. They were given other presents as well, including a handsome terrier dog, which they carried with them on the rest of their tour, and will no doubt take to the trenches of Flanders. The miscellaneous hospi-

talities of Belfast—surely the most generously demonstrative city in the British Empire—included an entertainment at the Hippodrome and an evening smoking concert.

"After all," exclaimed Colonel O'Donohue, when he was trying to acknowledge what he accurately described as a wonderful welcome, "after all, it is *our* fight, for we are part of the Empire. That being so, I do not feel that any great credit is due to us for coming and answering the call—we could not have done anything else."

The long journey to Cork, which lasted all day, was begun early on Tuesday morning; but early as it was, the ladies of Belfast were at the railway station with tea, fruit, sandwiches, and newspapers for every one of the 700 or 800 men of the battalion; and the Lord Mayor was on the platform to say "Good-bye," and the band of the Royal Irish Rifles to play repeatedly "Auld Lang Syne."

In Parnell's City

Cork was reached in the dark, but a vast crowd awaited the arrival of the crusaders who had crossed the Atlantic to fight for a sentiment. The Lord Mayor of Cork was accompanied on the railway platform by most of the members of the City Council, and there were also present the Earl of Bandon, K.P., the Lord-Lieutenant of the County, Major-General Doran, C.B., commanding the Southern District, the Bishop of Cork, and members of public bodies in the district. Not only was there a fitting official welcome for the

battalion, but the streets were gorgeously bedecked, as were also the fine ships in the harbour, and the people were exceedingly cordial and enthusiastic. There were three welcoming bands, and all the music most likely to appeal to Irishmen coming home for the first time was played.

Cork introduced her own particular notes into the greeting of the Irish Canadians. In the first place, she entertained them together, officers and men, to one luncheon, and in the second she gave her prominent ladies, led by the wife of the Lord-Lieutenant of the County, the wife of the Protestant Bishop, and the wife of the Lord Mayor, to wait upon them. The luncheon, both as a meal and as a spectacle—for the great City Hall was hung with the colours of all the Allies—was a brilliant success. The Lord Mayor, whose popularity may be inferred from the fact that he is just beginning his second term of office, made a speech as notable in its way as that of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, and though it was addressed to a gathering representing all opinions in Ireland, it was just as unanimously received.

The Message of Canada

"This great body of Irishmen," he said, "from the self-governing Dominion of Canada have given up all comforts of home and everything that makes life dear to them, and they have banded themselves together and joined up, hand in hand, Protestant and Catholic, and politicians of all shades of opinion, to do what they conceive to be their duty, to fight not alone for the Dominion of Canada that owns them, but for the land of their fathers. Personally, I look upon this visit as a message from the great mass of our exiled

MARCHING TO THE CITY HALL, CORK.

FORMED UP IN FRONT OF THE CITY HALL.

countrymen who have helped to make the great self-governing Dominion of Canada what it is to-day: one of the greatest bulwarks of the Empire—a message beseeching us to pause and sink our political and religious differences, and to unite for the common good of our beloved country."

In the course of the proceedings, the Mayor of Waterford, Mr. John Redmond's Parliamentary constituency, telegraphed a request that Waterford should be associated with Cork in the welcome; and similar requests came from the lord-lieutenants of the other counties of the Munster Province.

An inspection by Major-General Doran in the splendid South Mall of Cork—one of the finest thoroughfares in the United Kingdom—gave the citizens an opportunity of seeing the Irish Canadian troops at their leisure; and not only were the side-walks and the windows crowded, but the very roofs were occupied by spectators.

Mother and Son

The reception at Limerick the next day was but that of Cork over again, only even more cordial, if possible. Again, officers and men were gratified by being entertained to lunch together, and were deeply touched by the delicacy which led the ladies of the district themselves to wait upon them at table. The Lord Mayor said Canada had always come nobly to the assistance of the British Empire at need, and he was certain that the Rangers would distinguish themselves in the war as their fellow-countrymen had already done, and that they would help to bring about that

lasting peace to which the world was looking forward. On this occasion Colonel O'Donohue asked Captain the Hon. J. W. Shaughnessy to speak for the battalion, as Captain Shaughnessy happened to be a County Limerick man. The Captain, however, was not the only Limerick man in the battalion, as the spectators in the street had a little earlier had an opportunity of seeing demonstrated. During the march from the railway station an elderly woman, recognizing her son in the ranks, ran forward and embraced him, and he, who had perhaps not seen her for years, burst into tears.

A Happier Ireland

It was at Limerick that the tour closed. From first to last, it had been a triumphant progress. All parties had united to make it a success. If Ireland was delighted with the fine quality of her returned sons, they for their part were profoundly gratified to find Ireland more prosperous, especially in the South, than their fathers had ever known her, and buoyantly hopeful of an early and happy settlement of her own domestic problems, so akin to those of Canada, where they have not been found to be insoluble.

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